



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 5, 2005

Contact: Dr. Gundula Dunne (858) 694-2838

COUNTY VET OFFICE MONITORS FOR CANINE INFLUENZA

County Vet Office Is Working with Local Veterinarians

Due to a number of calls from concerned residents, the County Veterinarian's office wants to reassure dog owners that canine influenza has a low mortality rate and it has not yet been detected in San Diego County.

"Even though we haven't seen a confirmed case of canine influenza here, we are monitoring for it," said Dr. Nikos Gurfield, County Veterinarian. "We're working with the San Diego County Veterinary Medical Association to inform veterinarians about this new disease and how to diagnose it."

Canine influenza, or "dog flu", is an emerging viral disease that causes respiratory infection in dogs. Most dogs with canine influenza develop mild symptoms similar to the common dog disease "kennel cough". Symptoms include coughing, nasal discharge and mild fever that lasts for 10-21 days. The virus is spread by respiratory secretions, contaminated objects, and by people moving back and forth between infected and uninfected dogs. Severe cases of canine influenza can develop into pneumonia and require hospitalization. There is no vaccine for canine influenza.

If your dog is coughing or has a fever, you should call your veterinarian. Keep your dog at home until it is well, unless otherwise directed by your veterinarian. Do not take a coughing dog to locations where it may have contact with other dogs. Also, wash your hands after handling any sick dog before touching a healthy dog.

Canine influenza is believed to have originated in Florida in the last few years by jumping species from horses to racing dogs. It has since spread around the country and cases of canine influenza were reported in Los Angeles County last week. There has been no evidence that humans can be infected with canine influenza.

###